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MORMONISM AND THE NATURE OF DIVINE LOVE

Mormonism and God's Love

It is remarkable that throughout the history of Christian thought few indeed have started their exploration from the basic conviction that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). It is commonplace in Christian theology to start from metaphysical concepts, such as the notion that God is a perfect being or that God is the metaphysical explanation of all existence. The metaphysical approach to God presupposes a background in Greek philosophy and emphasizes the more abstract and impersonal attributes of God, including divine omniscience and omnipotence. It emphasizes the “hard-core metaphysical attributes” of divine simplicity, pure actuality, aseity, impassibility, timelessness, and immutability. Any theology that begins with metaphysical postulates makes it very difficult to speak of God in interpersonal terms. As Emil Brunner stated: “To think that it is correct *first of all* to deal with the metaphysical Being of God, and *then* with His Love, as His ‘ethical attribute,’ means that the decisive element of the Biblical Idea of God has not been perceived.”¹ Whereas the picture of God that has dominated Christian theology is that of the Unmoved Mover, it seems that the interpersonal God disclosed in the scripture is the Most Moved Mover—that person who above all else seeks to persuade us to enter into a loving relationship of the type that exists between a father and